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AN ELEGY

ON THE

ANCIENT GREEK MODEL,

ADDRESSED TO

The Right Reverend ROBERT LOWTH,

LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

SUNT ET ALIÆ POESEOS SPECIES, QUÆ QUANQUAM NOBISCUM COMITER PLERUMQ; ET FAMILIARITER VERSANTUR, GRAVIOREM TAMEN PERSONAM NONNUNQUAM INDUUNT, TALIS EST ELEGIA; NON HANC LEVEM DICO ET AMATORIAM, SED ANTIQUAM ILLAM SAPIENTEM, SANCTAM, SEVERAM, DUCEM VITÆ, MAGISTRAM MORUM, CIVITATUM ADMINISTRATICEM, VIRTUTIS ANTISTITEM, NE PLURES AUCTORES NOMINEM, QUORUM NULLÆ JAM SUPERSUNT RELIQUIÆ DE QUIBUS JUDICARE POSSIMUS; ECCE VOBIS SOLON, VIR SANCTISSIMUS, LEGUM LATOR SAPIENTISSIMUS, POETA OPTIMUS.

Lowth Prælecti.

Οι δ' ειχον δυναμιν, και χερμασιν ησαν αγηροι,
Και τοις εφρασαμην μηδεν ατιμες εχειν.

Ex Solonis Elegiis.

By WILLIAM HAYLEY, Esq.

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M DCC LXXXIII.

BRITISH MUSEUM

ELEGY.

MOURN! Son of Amos, mourn! in accent ſharp
Of angry ſorrow ſtrike thy heav'nly harp.
Mourn! thou ſublimeſt of the ſainted choir!
Thoſe lips, that, touch'd with thy cœleſtial fire,
Clear'd, from the gather'd clouds of many an age,
The bright'ning flame of thy prophetic rage;
Thoſe lips, thro' Learning's ſacred ſphere renown'd,
Have ſtain'd their glory by a ſervile ſound.
Envy with ranc'rous joy theſe accents heard,
And dwells with triumph on the fatal word;

Waging againſt Renown eternal wars,
Thus ſhe inſults the merit ſhe abhors:
* " How has the radiance of the mitre ceas'd!
" Oblivion's poppy ſhades the proſtrate prieſt:
" In dark ſervility's expanding cave
" Forgotten prelates hail thee from the grave;
" O Lucifer! of propheey the ſtar,
" Rolling through Hebrew clouds thy radiant car!
" Art thou too fall'n as we? Can Flatt'ry's tide
" Drown thy free ſpirit and thy Attic pride?
" Is this the man who ſpoke, in language ſtrong,
" The praiſe of Liberty's Athenian ſong?
" Bleſt are her notes, but curſt the ſordid things
" That prieſtcraft offers to the pride of Kings;
" For never, never ſhall fair Freedom's hand
" Enroll one prelate in her ſacred band!"

Peace! Envy, peace! nor deem, with bigot rage,
Long labours cancell'd by a haſty page;

Nor,

* See Iſaiah, chap. xiv.

Nor, if a word unweigh'd her lips eſcape,
Paint injur'd Virtue in Corruption's ſhape!
Shall ſland'rous Prejudice, with gen'ral blame,
Plunge ranks unſifted in the gulph of Shame?
If ſome be ſervile, ſhall we madly rave
That ev'ry churchman is in ſoul a ſlave?
Abhorr'd idea! fraught with baſeſt guile!
Turn to the ſplendid annals of our iſle!
See mitred Langton lead the patriot van,
And bear, O Liberty! thy ſacred plan!
Though luſt of vengeance regal pride inflame
To brand his virtue with Rebellion's name,
Still in the tented field, from fear exempt,
No menace ſhakes him, and no offers tempt;
Till England, ſav'd from tyrannous control,
Owes her bright charter to his guardian ſoul.
Let Freedom's eye our later ſtory ſearch!
Her modern champion iſſues from the church;
See Hoadley's perſevering zeal withdraw
The veil of bigotry from heav'nly law;

With decent truth expound, with reaſon ſcan
God's gracious edict, and the rights of man!
To ſhield the deareſt gift of Nature's hand
Was thine, pure ſpirit! and thy name ſhall ſtand
Engrav'd on Liberty's eternal rock,
With ardent Sidney, with the milder Locke,
And guarded by the Muſe of Glory, ſhine
In manly Akenſide's immortal line.
But theſe examples riſe from hallow'd earth;
The church has models ſtill of living worth:
Though ſome grave biſhops, fond of dull repoſe,
Without a dream of Learning's friends or foes,
Enjoy their table, or from thence withdrawn,
Sink in ſoft ſlumber on their ſleeves of lawn;
Though one fierce pedant, proud of ancient rule,
Raſhly miſtook a ſenate for a ſchool,
Till angry nobles bid his fury ceaſe,
And laſh'd the fiery pedagogue to peace;
We boaſt a Shipley, who with taſte refin'd
Enjoys that richeſt treaſure, wealth of mind;

Intent

Intent to pen, in Leiſure's learned hour,
His juſt Philippic on oppreſſive pow'r,
Or teach thy flow'rs, Simplicity, to bloom
With Attic ſweetneſs o'er an Engliſh tomb.
Nor you with honour can we fail to name,
Law! gen'rous guardian of that ſage's name,*
Who made mild government with faith agree,
And "ſtripp'd intolerance of every plea."
Nor dignity corrupts, nor time ſubdues
Your ſpirit, glowing with the nobleſt views;
While your keen eyes, undimm'd by age, explore
The utmoſt depths of metaphyſic lore,
Still guard his fame, whoſe genius you enjoy,
And the dark ſophiſt's baleful web deſtroy,
That ſeeks to ſhroud, with ſubtle falſehood ſpun,
The praiſe of Freedom's ſcientific Son!
O Lowth! we ſaw thy radiant name on high
Amid the the pureſt lights of Learning's ſky;

And

* See the preface to the new edition of Locke, by the Biſhop of Carliſle.

And long, if true to Freedom's guiding voice,
Long in thy ſplendor ſhall that ſphere rejoice;
One paſſing vapour ſhall diſſolve away,
And leave thy glory's unobſtructed ray.
But while on Fame's high precipice you ſtand,
Be nobly firm! nor bend the virtuous hand,
Fill'd with rich ſweets from Freedom's flow'ry mead,
To pluck Servility's oblivious weed!
High in the Court's rank ſoil that creeper winds,
And oft with dark embrace the Croſier binds;
While ſqueez'd from thence the ſubtle prelate flings
Its luſcious poiſon in the ear of Kings.
Nor ſpread in courts alone theſe noxious leaves,
My Lord, as largely as he pays, receives,
And ſupple chaplains to a prelate bring
A doſe as rich, as what he gives a King.
Such ſycophants (could ſuch to thee belong)
Might vent their venom on this friendly ſong;
"Shame on the wretch (theſe flatt'rers would exclaim)
"Who dares one accent of your voice to blame,

"But

" But fearing with your foes his name to blend,
" Yet, more abuſive, calls himſelf your friend.
No! let that radiant Truth, whoſe pow'r ſupreme
Rewards her genuine bard with Glory's beam,
Search my free ſpirit, and pronounce it clear
From meanneſs, ſpleen, malignity, or fear!
To ardent friendſhip I my numbers owe;
Whate'er their failings, from that ſource they flow;
If weak, yet honeſt; if preſumptuous, true;
Thy worth the motive, and thy fame the view!
The man whoſe writings pure delight diſpenſe,
Enchant my fancy, or enlarge my ſenſe,
Whoſe heav'nly wiſdom mending human faults,
Warms my chill'd virtue and my ſoul exalts;
Friend of my boſom I this man declare,
And in my inmoſt heart the treaſure wear,
Biſhop or clerk! his fortune bright or blank!
Rever'd as noble whatſoe'er his rank!
His praiſe I echo with a fond acclaim,
Joy in his health, and triumph in his fame.

With

With pure attachment, and with joy refin'd,
I boaſt ſuch friendſhip with thy letter'd mind.
Whene'er, with deep delight and new regard,
We ſearch thy comments on each Hebrew bard,
Where thy bold precepts to young minds impart
The end and value of the poet's art,
Its pow'rs ennobled by applauſe like thine,
Yet more we idolize that art divine;
*In that fair Virtue's living voice we hear,
In that behold her living form appear:
With joy the juſtice of your wrath we own,
When your mild ſpirit takes a ſharper tone,
When touch'd by Warburton's vindictive gall
It fires at Freedom's controverſial call;
From wounded Genius flows your ſplendid line,
As from the trodden grape the ſparkling wine:
Your hand, like Iſrael's unanointed King
Launching the pebble from his certain ſling,

Strikes

* Vivas hic virtutis voces audimus, vivam effigiem cernimus.
Lowth de Poeticæ fine et utilitate.

Strikes to the duſt Preſumption's mighty boaſt,
The proud Goliah of her critic hoſt.
Thus robe'd in honour of the richeſt dye,
And view'd by Freedom with a parent's eye,
From thee that goddeſs with amazement hears
One note that ſounds diſcordant in her ears;
Wild ſparkles flaſh from her aſtoniſh'd eyes,
O ſave my falt'ring ſon! (ſhe fondly cries)
Call his paſt glories to his ſharpen'd ſight,
And let him learn from their collected light,
My flow'rs, immortal, fear no winter's frown;
While loſt in darkneſs Adulation's down
Flies like the goſſamer, that whirlwinds bear,
In ſport contemptuous, through the waſte of air.
Tell him, though bright the ſmile of Kings may ſeem,
There ſhines a jewel of a brighter beam,
Above that ſmile, all human wealth above,
'Tis worn by Keppel in his country's love.
Shall Lowth adapt no more his Attic ſtyle
To the meridian of my fav'rite iſle?

But feebly ſpeak, in France's languid tone,
Faint as beneath Oppreſſion's burning zone?
Or, blazing only with a bigot's fire,
Awake the ſlumb'ring flames of regal ire;
Stretch the ſtate-theoriſt on Prieſthood's rack,
And from the pulpit* aim the perſonal attack?
Far other precepts ſuit the hallow'd ſage,
Who aims to purify this venal age:
With juſter wrath our mitred Lords declaim
On man's adult'rous guilt, and woman's ſhame;
Yes! lovely woman! Faſhion's wayward ſpleen
Has idly plung'd, like Ægypt's giddy queen,
Thy purity, that pearl of richeſt price,
In the deep chalice of diſſolving Vice.
Though thy unbluſhing frailties ſcorn excuſe,
Let Pity ſtill her palliatives produce!

Confirm'd

* See the late ſermon by the Biſhop of London, and his note on Dr. Price.

Confirm'd by ages, let this truth be known,
* Thy Honour's guardian firſt forgets his own:
While man holds Freedom as the nobleſt wealth,
Pride of his heart, and of his days the health,
With native charms his fair companion's grac'd,
If plain, yet lovely; and if ſimple, chaſte;
Endearing age ſucceeds to rapt'rous youth,
Her life is virtue, and her love is truth.
But, when her guard, in Luxury's venal hour,
Yields his chaſte ſoul a proſtitute to Pow'r,
Heav'n, in juſt vengeance on the abject ſlave,
Corrupts the pureſt gift its bounty gave;
The tree of Comfort bears the thorn of Strife,
And poiſon'd marriage grows the peſt of life;
Ills after ills in dire ſucceſſion flow,
And private miſery mounts to public woe.

* This is particularly proved by the celebrated chaſtity of the Roman ladies in the early days of the republic: and yet more by that of our Gothic anceſtors in the pureſt ages of Chivalry.

See Stuart's admirable View of Society in Europe.

O Lowth! whoſe voice, by pureſt Learning taught
To ſpeak the language of exalted thought,
May beſt encounter Vice's murky crew,
And Faith and Virtue's fainting pow'rs renew,
Still by ſage efforts of a ſoul ſublime
Correct the rank abuſes of the time!
Rememb'ring ſtill, with Wiſdom's juſt regard,
*Thy fav'rite maxim of the Attic bard:
" As from the clouds burſts forth the weight of ſnow,
" Lightnings or hail, that blaſt the ſcene below,
" So burſts the ruin of a ſinking State
" From the dark vices of the guilty grate."
In this bleſt iſle, and ſhining only here,
Aſtræa, ſafe in Freedom's guardian ſpear,
With native boldneſs in her balance flings
The weak, the mighty; Miniſters and Kings;

And

* Εκ νεφαλης πελεται χιονος μεγας ηδε χαλαζης
Ανδρων δ' εκ μεγαλων πολις ολλυται.

Ex Solonis Elegiis.

And Piety's blind zeal would curſe the land,
If it could force this balance from her hand.
Riſe, then! O riſe! with Hoadley's ſpirit fir'd,
But in thy richer eloquence attir'd;
Teach us to guard from ev'ry mean control
That manly vigour of the judging ſoul,
Which Faith approves, which Loyalty allows!
Teach us, while Honour to thy doctrine bows,
That Duty's praiſe in no blind worſhip lies,
But Reaſon's homage to the juſt and wiſe!
So to thy Country, to thy God endear'd,
By Heav'n protected as on earth rever'd,
May thy mild age in pureſt fame rejoice;
In fame, where Envy hears no jarring voice!
So may Religion, with divine relief,
Drop her rich balm on thy parental grief!

May that ſweet comforter, the heav'nly Muſe,
Who fondly treaſures Sorrow's ſacred dews,
In Glory's vaſe preſerve the precious tear
Shed by paternal Love on Beauty's bier!
And O! when thou, to Learning's deep regret,
Muſt pay at Nature's call our common debt;
While life's laſt murmurs ſhake the parching throat,
And Pity catches that portentous note;
While in its hollow orb the rolling eye
Of Hope is turn'd convulſive to the ſky,
May holieſt viſitants, each ſainted ſeer
Whoſe well known accents warble in thine ear,
Deſcend, with Mercy's delegated pow'r,
To ſoothe the anguiſh of that awful hour;
With lenient aid releaſe thy ſtruggling breath,
Guide thy freed ſpirit through the gates of Death,

Shew

Shew thee, emerging from this earthly ſtorm,
Thy lov'd Maria in a ſeraph's form,
And give thee, gazing on the Throne of Grace,
*To view thy mighty Maker face to face.

* This bold expreſſion of exalted piety was borrowed from St. Paul, by the great Condè, the ſublime and enviable circumſtances of whoſe death are thus deſcribed by the eloquent Boſſuet ——— "Oui, dit il, nous "verrons Dieu comme il eſt, face à face, il repetoit en Latin, avec un "gout merveilleux, ces grands mots: Sicuti eſt: facie ad faciem, et on "ne ſe laſſoit point de le voir dans ce doux tranſport."

Oraiſon Funebre de Louis de Bourbon.

THE END.

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